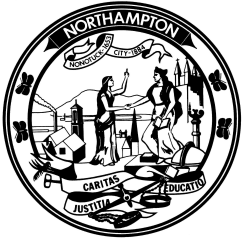




ARPA

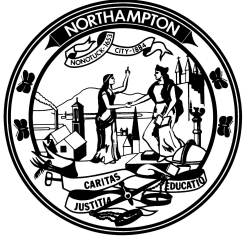
American Rescue Plan Act Community Survey Results

Chief of Staff Alan Wolf
Presentation to ARPA Commission
May 9, 2022



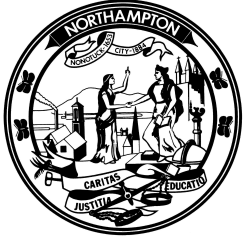
ARPA Community Survey

- The main goal of the survey was to help Northampton develop a transparent, strategic, and equitable plan for Northampton's federal ARPA funding
 - **Part One** - understand the impact of the pandemic on city residents
 - **Part Two** - survey city residents' priorities for COVID-19 response and recovery efforts
- The survey was available online from October 1, 2021 through November 28, 2021
- The survey reached roughly 1,460 respondents, with nine residents opting to take the survey in Spanish



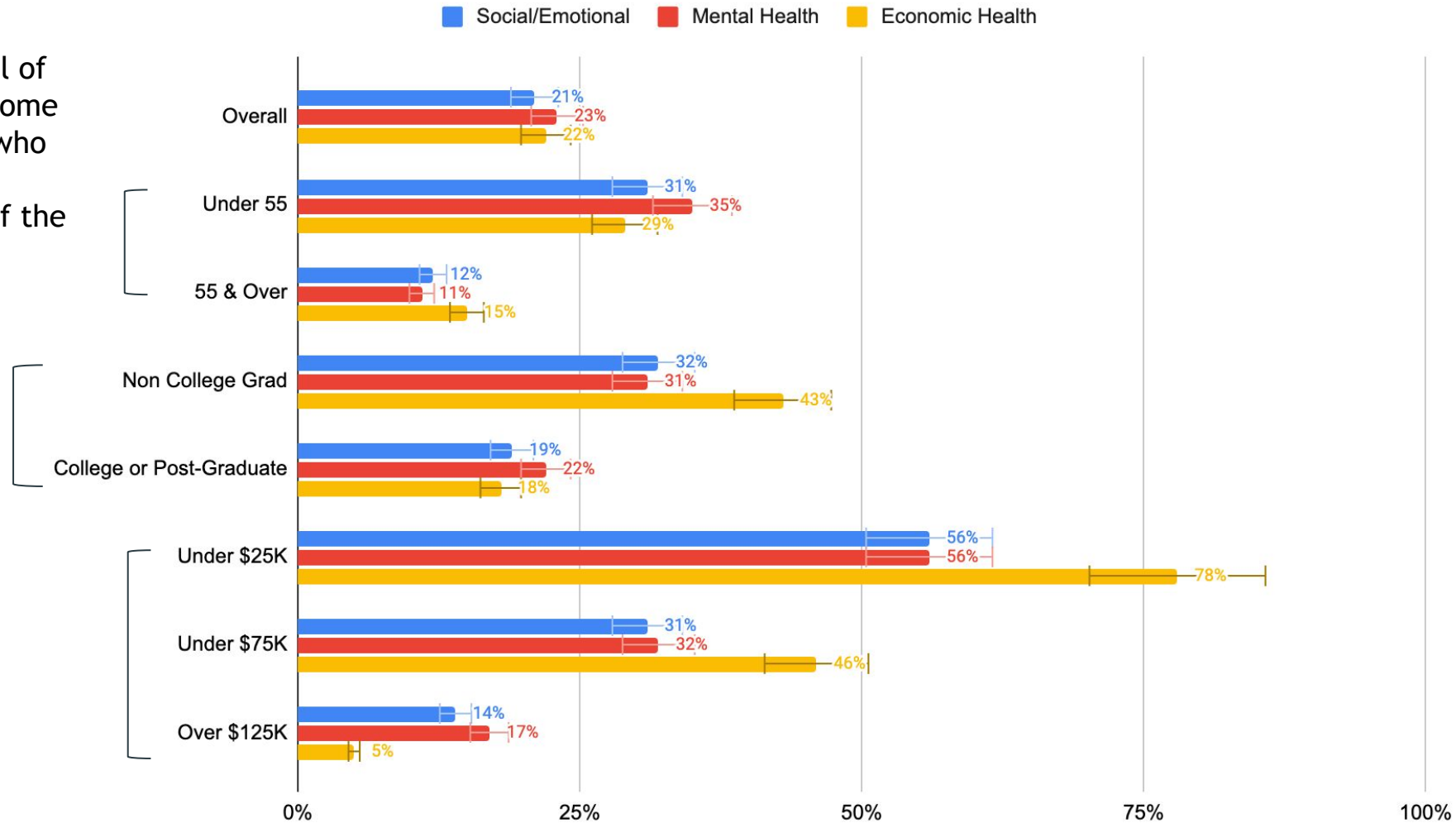
Mental, Social, and Emotional Health were key issues during the pandemic

- While strong majorities of Northampton stakeholders reported their status as 'excellent' or 'good' on every measure asked, about one in five respondents shared that their household was doing only 'fair' or 'poor' in terms of mental health (23%) and social and emotional health (21%).
- Further, mental health-related issues top Northampton residents list of major or moderate problems, with 28% 'feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge,' 18% 'feeling down, depressed, or hopeless,' 16% 'feeling lonely or isolated,' and about 13% each citing access to mental health services and medical services as problems.



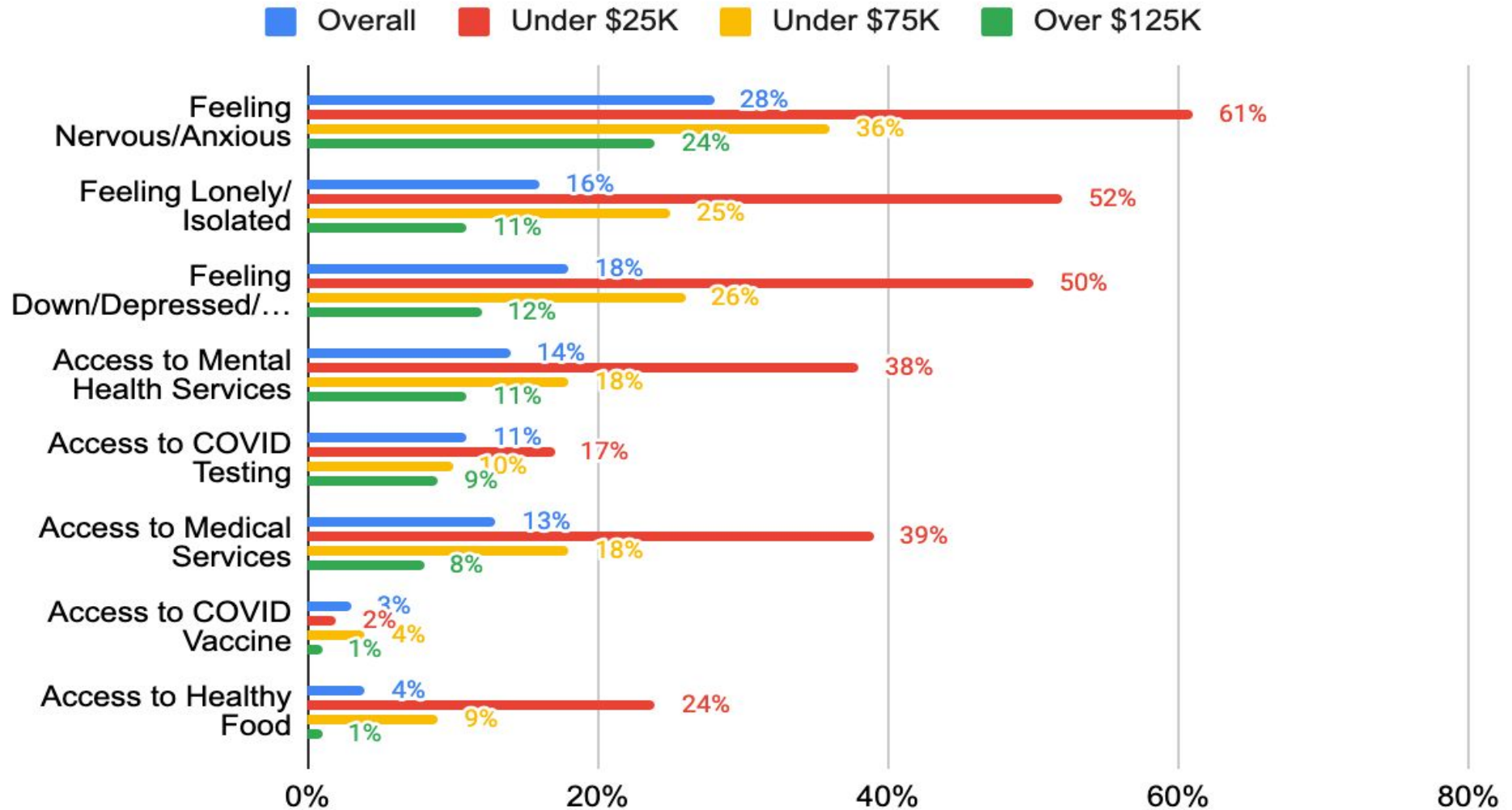
The Impacts of the Pandemic on Health Conditions by Age, Education, and Income

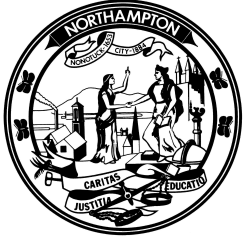
Compare age, level of education, and income to see the groups who experienced the heaviest impacts of the pandemic.





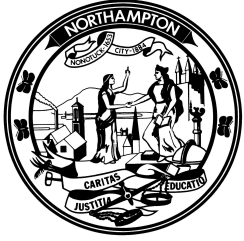
Income is the Greatest Indicator of How Profoundly People Experienced Problems



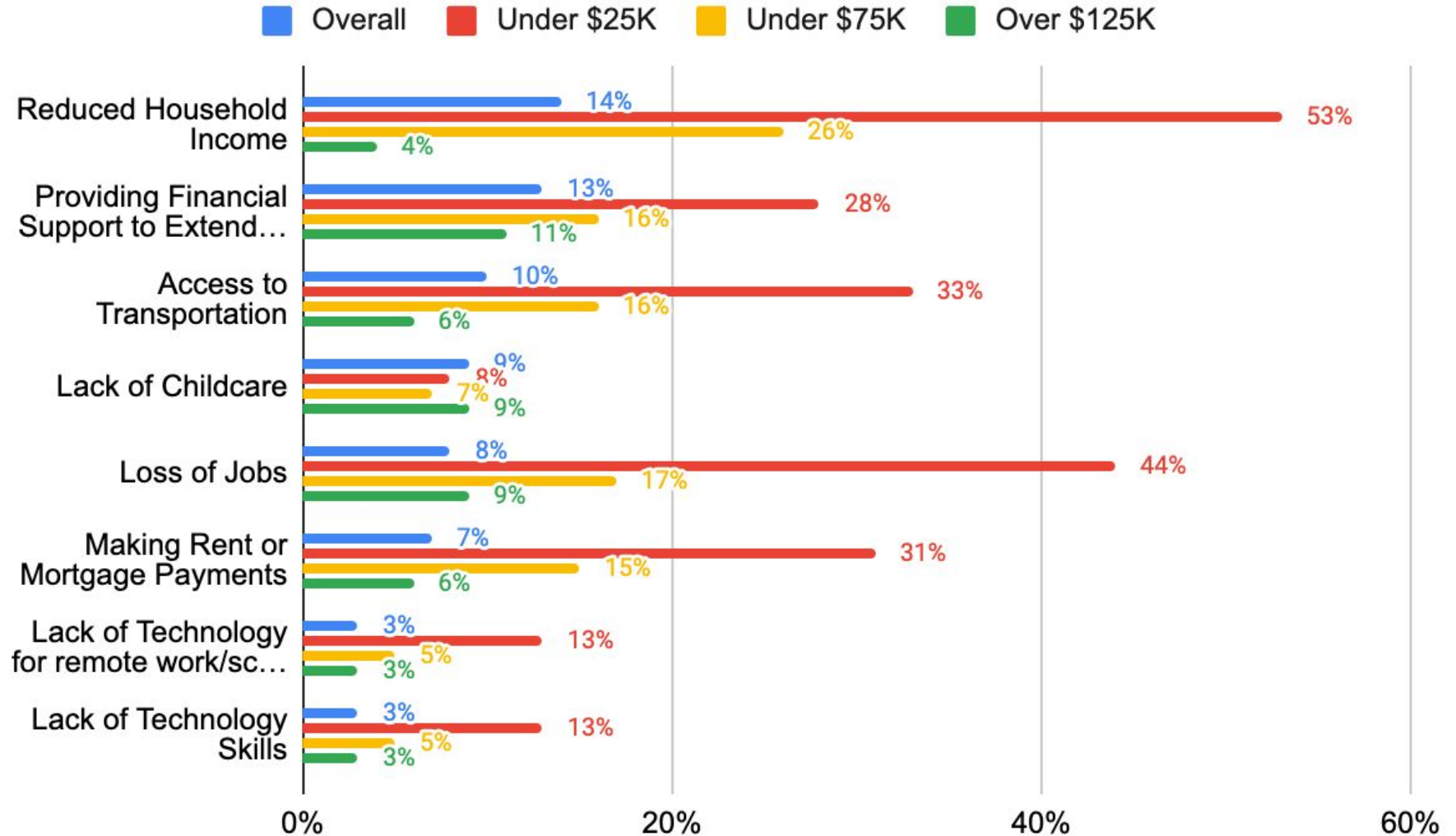


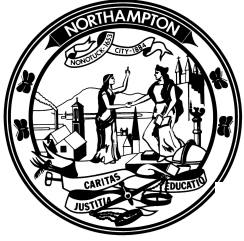
The Pandemic Created Financial Difficulties for Some Locals

- Economic concerns (14%), and providing remote support to extended family members (13%) are listed as major or moderate problems facing Northampton households. Forty-six percent share that COVID-19 had a major or slight impact on their household income.
- Nineteen percent report that someone accessed unemployment insurance in their household, along with 7% who took advantage of food assistance. Far fewer report accessing mortgage, rental, or utility assistance in Northampton. Most said they were aware of some or all of the services available, and few reported difficulties accessing them - with the exception of 7% who said it was very or somewhat difficult to access unemployment benefits.

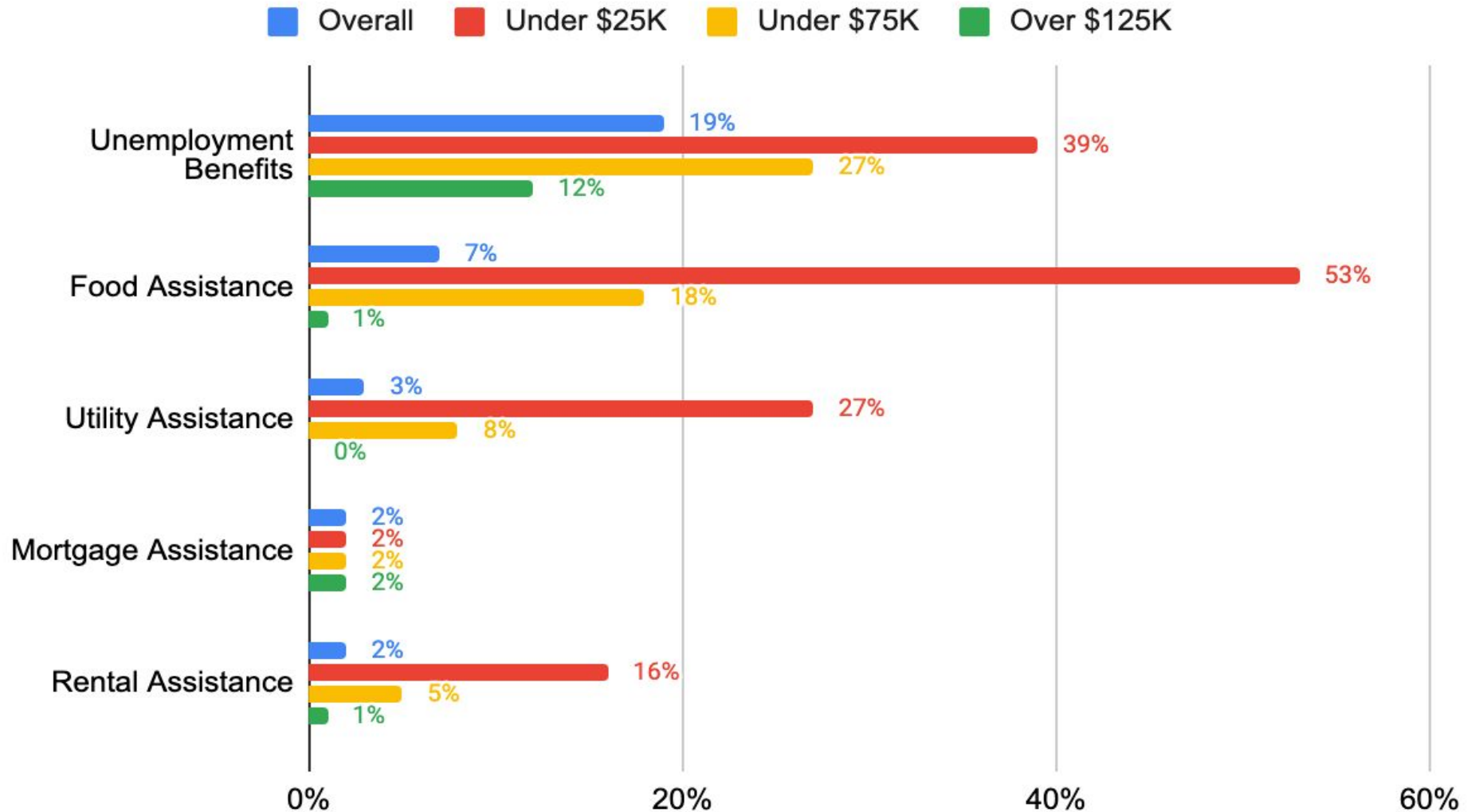


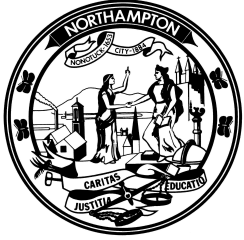
Income is the Greatest Indicator of How Profoundly People Experienced Problem (2)





Income Also Drives Access to Services and Supports



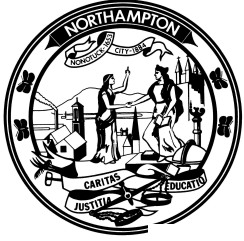


Northampton Reports Major Impacts on School-Aged Children

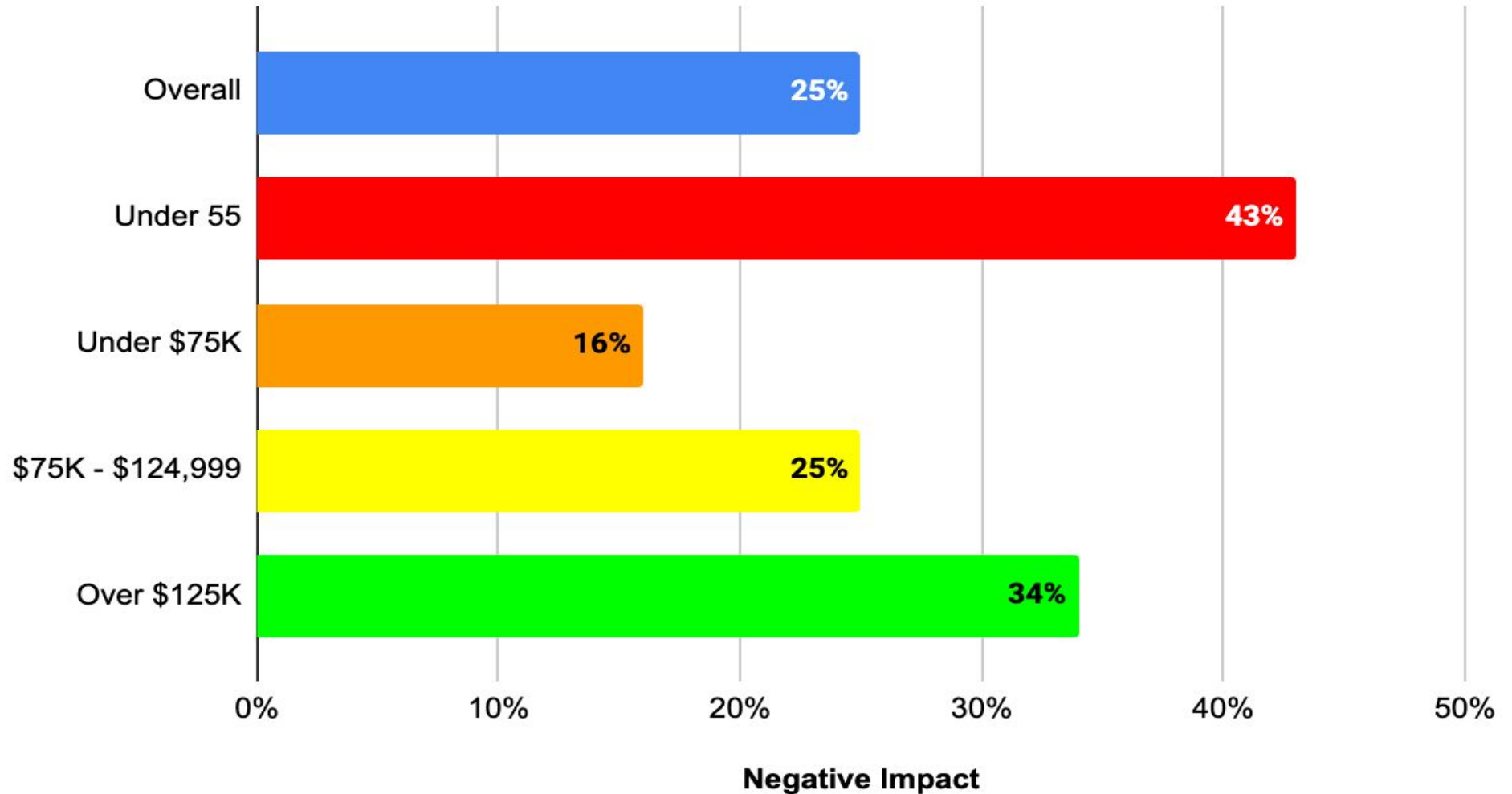
- Of the 360 respondents who reported they have school-aged children (or 31% of the overall survey population), 50% reported that the pandemic had a 'negative impact' on their children's education, and 33% said it had a 'major negative impact.'

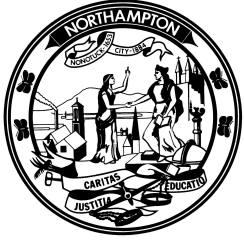
Impacts on children in their own words:

- *"social/emotional impact. previously highly motivated and high performing kids became less motivated and learned less."*
- *"My older child felt isolated and lonely and had a hard time concentrating, my younger child became scared and often angry and lost social skills he was developing."*
- *"Remote learning was very difficult for one of my sons. The lack of in person contact with teachers and friends impacted his mental health"*
- *"School closures, challenges with childcare, lack of social learning and development, increase in screen use."*

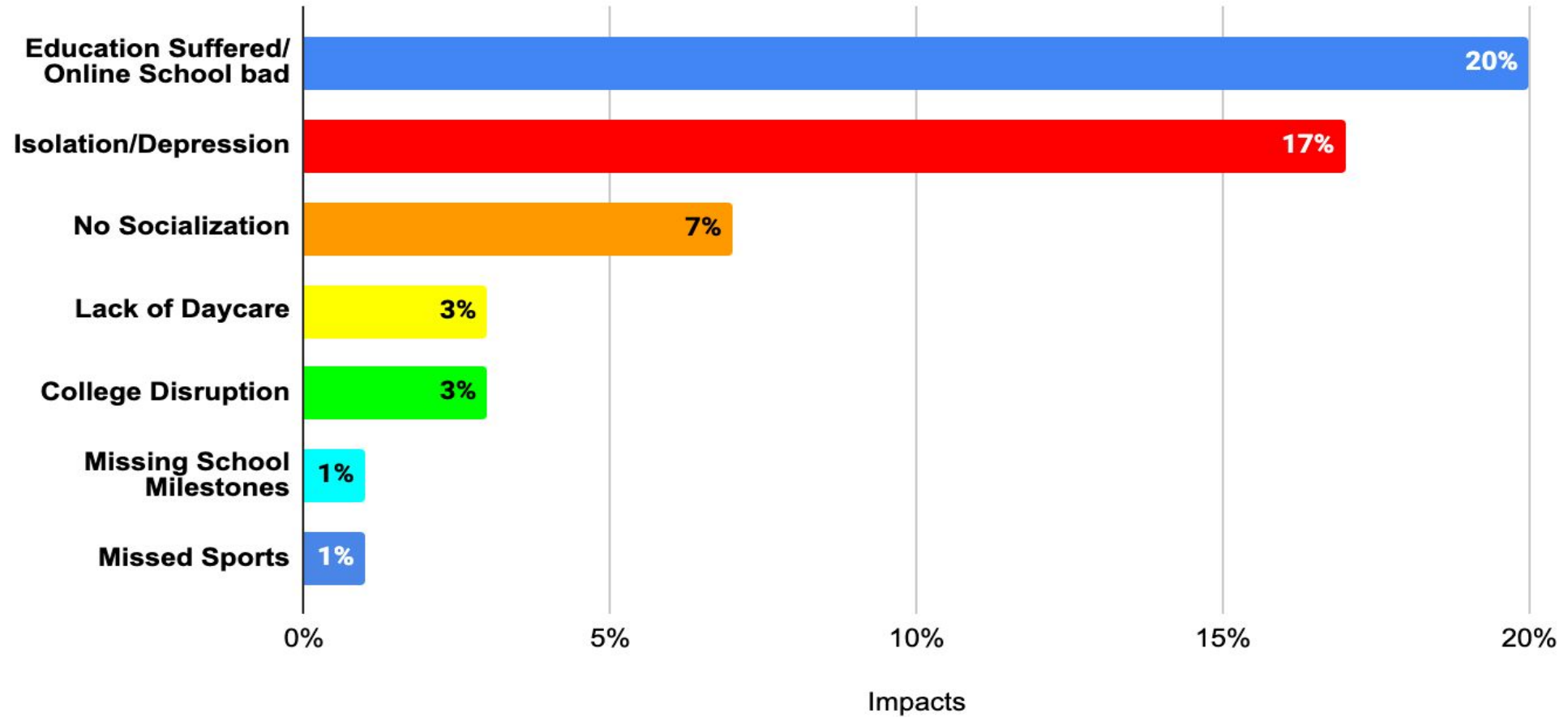


Groups Reporting Negative Impacts On Children's Education





Impacts on Children Quantified: 1 in 5 Say Education Suffered





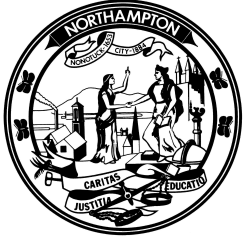
Additional Family Challenges

- *“I spent about \$20k on childcare last year that was unexpected. I have a childcare voucher but I couldn’t access it due to losing our spot in a voucher accepting programs when they canceled their youngest class due to covid. I contacted local representatives but nobody could do anything. We were all on our own to figure it out. Very stressful year for parents and as a single mom... well, I planned on raising my kids in a village! Until they are vaccinated it will be a struggle still”*
- *“Attempting to work from home while everyone is home, close quarters”*
- *“The monopoly of Comcast and its cost is a real challenge when you are so dependent of internet access”*
- *“Were unable to visit elderly parent in assisted living, loss of contracted work as self employed person, college age child had to move home and attend community college remotely, loss of social connections”*
- Quantifying the open end codes, results in “Isolation and Loneliness” at 18%, “Miss my community/ Isolation” at 12%, “Can’t visit family” at 6%, “Income loss” at 6%, and “Increased costs of living” and “Access to health care” at 5% each at the top of the list.



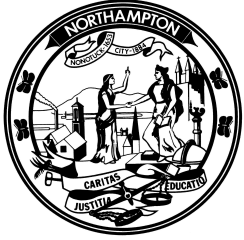
Top Five Priorities for ARPA Funds

	Overall
Food Security	56%
Climate Change Efforts	51%
Housing Assistance	50%
Houselessness Assistance	49%
Public Health Response	42%
Childcare/ Early Ed	40%
Health Care/ Wellness	38%
Water/Sewer Infrastructure	36%
Broadband	35%
Small Biz Help	32%
Seniors/ Veterans Help	29%
Arts, Culture, Tourism	27%
Transportation	24%
Job Training	23%
Outdoor Recreation	19%



While Food Security, Climate Change, Housing and Houselessness are Important to Almost Everyone...

- *Men tend to be more interested in public health responses, water and sewer infrastructure upgrades, services for seniors and veterans, and broadband. Women are slightly more likely to support arts & culture initiatives.*
- *Respondents under age 55 drive support for houselessness and childcare initiatives, while older respondents focus mostly on food insecurity and water & sewer infrastructure.*
- *Non-college graduates favor supports for housing assistance, childcare, small businesses, seniors and veterans. College graduates and up are slightly more focused on climate change and workforce development.*
- *Households earning over \$125K a year are most interested in food insecurity, small business assistance, arts and culture, workforce training, and outdoor recreation. Middle income households want to focus on climate change, childcare supports, and broadband. Lower income households are least interested in childcare supports, arts & culture, and workforce development.*



Ideas Were Diverse, but the Top Categories were...

Houseless Support	10%
Broadband	9%
Public Transportation	8%
Affordable Housing	6%
Climate Change ideas	5%
Improve Downtown	5%
Affordable Child Care	4%
Expand Survival Center	4%

“The survival center could use more space to accommodate the services they have added since the pandemic.”

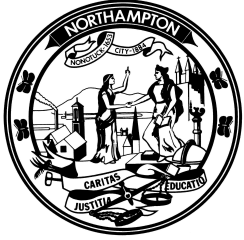
“Continue and expand facilities and services of organizations which provide food to those in need.”

“Solar power on every home and all city buildings. Build more housing on public transport lines for low income folks. All city buses be electric.”

“Electrify & expand PVRTA services”

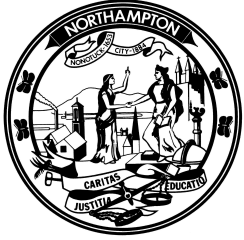
“Yes! Municipal broadband, safer and more bike and walking routes, fixing and climate-resisting infrastructures for all utilities and needs, etc.”

“Just give housing to the unhoused! Housing first, with no expectations for sobriety or employment, et cetera. Give housing and the rest will come.”



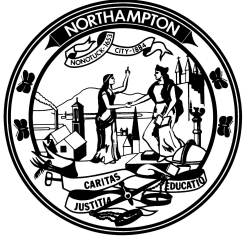
Most Critically Important City-Wide Community Needs for the City to Focus Federal Resources

Not enough affordable housing	75%
Not enough support for small businesses	53%
Streets and sidewalks in poor condition	51%
Insufficient public transportation or poor transportation services	48%
Not enough sustainability and environmentally friendly services	47%
Too many vacant properties	47%
Not enough businesses or right type of business nearby	35%
Not enough quality housing	32%
Other Neighborhood Needs (please specify)	28%
Crime/illegal activity/safety issues	25%
Too much litter, trash or presence of illegal dumping	22%
Not enough parks or recreational areas nearby	19%
Not enough property maintenance and upkeep	15%
Too many foreclosures	5%



Demographic Details Underlying People's Top Five Priorities...

- *Women make climate change efforts a higher priority, while men are more likely to list streets and sidewalks in their top five.*
- *Older respondents are the most focused on streets and sidewalks.*
- *College graduates prioritize affordable housing, public transportation, and climate change, while non-college graduates favor streets and sidewalks, crime prevention, trash cleanup, and property maintenance & upkeep.*
- *Households earning over \$125K a year are more likely to mention vacant properties, while lower-income respondents want more affordable housing and better public transportation.*



Advice people would give to Northampton's Leaders About How to Invest ARPA (Quantified):

Expand Homeless Services	12%
Affordable Housing	10%
Economic Development/ Downtown	8%
Infrastructure/ Roads/ Sidewalks	7%
Small Biz Assistance	7%
Climate Change	6%
Municipal Broadband	4%
Job Training	3%
Public Transportation	2%
Food Assistance	2%



Advice people would give to Northampton's Leaders About How to Invest ARPA (Quotations):

"Renovate an empty space downtown for the resilience hub."

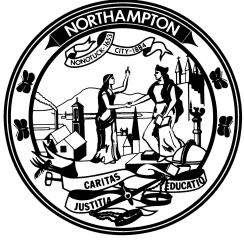
"Most vulnerable residents should have programs to help guide them to stability in housing and work, enlist their contributions to city committee work, and hold space for interpersonal support groups."

"The vitality of Northampton's downtown has been declining slowly for the past 20 years. The creative mix of commerce, entertainment, and arts serves as an important draw for tourism and source of identity for locals. Focus and resources directed there will ripple out - creating jobs and economic lift for the broader community. In tandem with those efforts, it is important to develop affordable housing so that young professionals, students, and new residents can find a place to call home."

"People in need first. Supported housing!"

"Affordable rental housing for individuals near downtown or on bus lines."

"Fix sidewalks and potholes; provide grant programs for small business owners; stronger support to address houselessness."



Final Advice From A Respondent:

“Do your best, listen to everyone. When you decide on a particular action, check again with those most likely to be impacted to see if your solution will really help them.”

Questions?